

Hospital Bureau of Standards and Supplies

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April 17, 1946

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The Honorable Henry A. Wallace
Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

A few weeks ago I received from the American Standards Association a press release relating to the "return to private enterprise the important function of determining industrial and consumer standards." A copy of your letter to Mr. Charles E. Wilson was enclosed.

I am a member of the American Standards Association's Advisory Committee on Ultimate Consumer Goods, representing the American Hospital Association. I am also a member of the Committee on Purchasing, Standardization and Simplification of Hospital Furnishings, Supplies and Equipment of the American Hospital Association. This latter committee has worked closely over a number of years with the Simplified Practice Division and the Commercial Standards Division of the National Bureau of Standards with excellent results. This committee has, I believe, accomplished more in establishing standards of quality and simplifying lines of products in the institutional field than any similar group in this country.

I call this matter to your attention because I am particularly concerned about the proposal to take this work away entirely from the Department of Commerce. I note in your letter to Mr. Wilson that you stated that the Department has "a statutory responsibility to provide such services in the interest of business and industry and the general public..." Your stand on this matter is appreciated, I am sure, by all those groups interested in standardization and who wish to see the work of the Department of Commerce extended and not curtailed. I believe the record will show that the Divisions of Simplified Trade Practices and Commercial Standards have accomplished more in the field

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of finished consumer goods than any other agency or agencies in this country. I believe it will be unfortunate for the Department of Commerce to drop its simplification and standardization activities and turn all of this work over to a private agency.

The need for transferring the Divisions of Simplified Trade Practices and Commercial Standards out of the Bureau of Standards to the Office of Domestic Commerce is not entirely clear to me but, in any event, I hope this move will only have the effect of expediting this work and not slowing it up. There should always be, I feel, a close association between the technical departments of the Bureau of Standards and the standardizing divisions.

I fully agree with your statement that in all standardization activities there should be close cooperation between the American Standards Association and the Department of Commerce. There is an urgent need for correlating and integrating this work in order that it may be extended as rapidly as possible and duplication of effort may be avoided.

Let me say in closing that the organization with which I am associated, the Hospital Bureau of Standards and Supplies, is particularly desirous of having standards of quality and simplification of commodity lines extended as rapidly as possible. I am always ready to help with this work in any way that I can.

Very truly yours,

D. H. Palmer
D. H. Palmer
Research Director

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